



SUCCESS STORIES AROUND THE STATE

CASE STUDY

BENNETT ELEMENTARY (K-6), JACKSON, MICHIGAN

FUNDRAISING—OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL DAY

After developing policies regarding healthier food choices for classrooms, the Jackson school board and district wellness team chose another venue to model healthy choices: school fundraisers.

It took about a year to revamp the school fundraising policy, which was implemented during the 2007-08 school year. That year, Bennett Elementary switched from using the sale of food items with low nutritional value, such as candy, to the sale of “healthy” food and non-food items.

“The key is healthier options. It’s the right mindset for students and parents. We are encouraging students to eat healthy and be healthy—offering healthier options for fundraisers reinforces those messages. It’s very important to send consistent messages to students and parents.”

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SCOTT HUTCHINS, PRINCIPAL OF BENNETT ELEMENTARY



The fundraising policy defines “healthy” foods using criteria for nutritional content including calories and sugar content. Non-food items include products such as wrapping paper, T-shirts, coffee mugs and cookbooks.

The fundraisers, which occur both during and after school, are approved by the school district. To apply for approval, teachers submit requests to the building principal who determines if the fundraisers meet the policy criteria. The principal then forwards acceptable requests to the district finance office for final approval.

Utilizing a variety of fundraising companies, Bennett Elementary has hosted several successful fundraising events such as book fairs, cookbook sales, school store movie night and Texas Holdem night. The proceeds help support educational assemblies, field trips and class projects.

Students took the changes in stride, however, there was initial resistance from several school faculty members and parents. In the past, candy was a popular fundraising item, and there was some concern that healthy food and non-food items would not sell as easily or bring in as much revenue. This concern disappeared after the success of the new fundraising method was evident: Several of the non-food items outsold previous bestsellers such as candy. All in all, the product switch did not result in a net change in fundraising revenue.

“I think the new fundraising items are good,” says Lindsey Rigelman, co-chair of the Parent-Teacher Organization at Bennett Elementary. “It gets kids more motivated to think about healthy choices and to eat healthier. And more people are apt to buy products because of the different options. Last year’s cookbook sale was a big success.”

The development of the new fundraising policy was a joint effort, involving the Coordinated School Health Team, administrative support and the Parent-Teacher Organization. For other schools interested in revamping a fundraising policy, this group recommends obtaining buy-in from key people in the school system and community.



CASE STUDY

BOTHWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL (5TH-8TH GRADES), MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN**CLASSROOM REWARDS**

Searching for a non-food method to encourage and reward students for behavior that qualifies as “good” or “beyond what is expected,” the school district’s Health & Wellness Committee developed an incentive program that’s worth its weight in gold. The fact that the program has been in effect for over five years is a testament to its success.

When a student does a good job, helps someone, participates in a school-related activity or goes beyond what is expected, a teacher and other school staff member awards the student with a “gold card” (equivalent to raffle entry form) and/or sends a “positive postcard” home to the student’s parents.

The principal, Bill Saunders, asks that all teachers send home at least one positive postcard for each student in their class each year.

Once the gold card is signed by a parent, the student submits the card and is entered into a weekly prize drawing. Prizes include ski lift tickets, ski rentals, movie gift certificates, hockey tickets, YMCA passes, t-shirts, and gift certificates to local merchants. When a student wins the prize drawing, their name is announced during “Gold Card Friday”. Every two weeks, students in the 7th and 8th grades are eligible to win an iTunes gift card. Larger drawings are offered at the end of each marking period. At the end of the school year, all cards are entered into a drawing for a new bike.

In the past, many teachers used their own money to purchase candy and prizes for rewards. Now, Box Tops collected by students in the Honor Society and donations from the Parent Organization help cover the cost of prizes, gold cards and postcards. “We’ve reduced our reliance on candy as a motivator for students,” said Paula Diedrich, Honor Society Advisor and parent, “and it’s less expensive for staff.”

In fact, many parents have commented on how much they appreciate receiving positive postcards that recognize students’ improvement in the classroom, participation in school activities and /or success in school-related competitions such as spelling bees, talent shows, and music solos and ensembles. School staff members are pleased to have the opportunity to provide positive rewards—they feel better knowing that they are rewarding students positively instead of providing sugary treats.

The biggest challenges with the program are that older students are less likely to seek out gold cards and that some teachers continue to use candy instead of gold cards as rewards. The Wellness Committee is working on solutions to these issues.

In addition to the incentive program for students, Bothwell Middle School holds a weekly “Blue Card” staff appreciation prize drawing for faculty and staff.

The Health & Wellness Committee believes that the keys to the program’s success are to ask students for input on prizes, make sure prizes are age-appropriate, seek out donations for prizes, and develop a similar program for staff.

Students and school staff are motivated by and enjoy this incentive/positive feedback program. “Students are excited about prizes and more students seek out ways to earn a gold card. And families also appreciate the positive feedback. The parents also like that prizes are age-appropriate and allow the family to be involved.”

SARA MOYLE, NUTRITIONAL HEALTH TEACHER
AND HEALTH & WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEMBER



CASE STUDY

BUCHANAN ELEMENTARY (PRE-K – 5), GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

CLASSROOM PARTY/CELEBRATION

Up until three years ago, classroom celebrations of student birthdays often included cake at Buchanan Elementary School. Other than the food provided by parents, teachers paid out-of-pocket for all birthday celebration items including food, beverages, gifts and crafts. For many teachers, this expense increasingly became a financial burden.

When school nurse Madonna Saia suggested offering more nutritious options for classroom birthday celebrations, the Coordinated School Health Team (CSHT) took on the project and developed a plan to encourage teachers to make the change. “We’re all very committed to classroom wellness,” said Saia. The CSHT followed guidelines from their district’s wellness policy and their school’s food and beverage policy. They also looked to Michigan Action for Healthy Kids’ “Tips and Tools to Help Implement Michigan’s Healthy Food and Beverages Policy” for creative ways to celebrate birthdays in the classroom.

To encourage teachers to offer healthier food and beverage choices for birthday celebrations, teachers involved in the CSHT set an example by offering healthier options instead of cake. The options include: yogurt, yogurt smoothies, banana bread, fruit, popcorn, roasted chick peas, string cheese, whole grain crackers, 100% juice and water. “I feel better about offering healthier foods,” said Jeff DeJong, first grade teacher. “The students question why we don’t have the traditional cake, but they don’t complain about it.” Karen Blatchford, kindergarten teacher, adds, “The kids eat less sugar and they’re not so wound up. They love the fruit, so they still see it as a treat.”

Several of the teachers routinely celebrate birthdays without food. Instead, the students may sing songs, play games such as bingo or musical chairs, make crafts, and take photos. These teachers also provide the birthday student with a small gift such as a pencil or certificate. “I like the changes,” said Rita Paniccia, fourth grade teacher. “It’s sending a healthy, positive message. The students accept the change—they like any type of recognition or reward.”

“I like keeping celebrations food-free and low-key. Honestly, we need as much teaching time as possible. However, if a parent has a special request, I won’t deny them—it doesn’t happen that often.”

REBECCA DUNN, KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

After three years, the majority of teachers and parents are following the CSHT’s birthday celebration recommendations, and the CSHT will soon establish a school standard for birthday celebrations. Many teachers are more than happy to simplify classroom celebrations.

For schools interested in making this change, the CSHT recommends communicating with parents about the new birthday celebration policy at the beginning of the school year and asking for more school support in planning celebrations. “I like doing something different [with classroom celebrations],” said Carol Taylor, fifth grade teacher. “The parents liked trying something new, too.” Kindergarten teacher Karen Blatchford agrees, “Most parents are receptive and go along with it. Give it a try and you may be surprised at how well it’s received by all.”





CASE STUDY

CHERRYLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL, ELK RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

STUDENT-LED TEAM

In order to empower students to be health champions, Jami Gray, the health teacher at Cherryland Middle School in Elk Rapids, created a student-led health committee called PULSE: Preventing Unhealthy Lifestyles Every Day. The team is supervised by the health and physical education teachers and works closely with the school foodservice department. The team's premise is to determine, plan, and implement health education efforts and improvements to the school health environment that have been approved by school staff. Twenty student volunteers participate on the PULSE team which meets during lunch for 30 minutes two times a month.

"Our new school PULSE team has empowered our students to think about everyday occurrences from the perspective of personal health," said Mrs. Eberle, 7th grade teacher at Cherryland Middle School. "They have been instrumental in advocating for less processed food in the cafeteria and for more fruit and vegetable choices. They use peer pressure in a very positive way to encourage others to move more, eat well, and stay hydrated."

The following is a sampling of the accomplishments through the initiatives championed by the PULSE team over the last five years:

- Painted murals on the walls of the lunchroom depicting the Food Guide Pyramid and the student's version of Veggie Tales.
- Created public service announcements on Animoto which were broadcast school-wide.
- Decreased ala carte availability to two times per week to encourage school lunch participation and encourage selection of healthier food and beverage choices.
- Recommended the switch from Styrofoam lunch trays to hard plastic trays that can be washed.
- Discontinued fried foods and sold the school's deep-fat fryer.
- Championed taste-testing of vegetables.
- Provided health-related presentations to the entire school.
- Involved in morning calisthenics.
- Championed 20-minute hall walks two times a week before school.
- Requested that students have access to drinking water during lunch.
- Planned a field trip to the "Bodies Revealed" exhibit at the Grand Rapids Public Museum.

The PULSE team operates on a miniscule budget. Projects championed by the PULSE team are cost-neutral. The only project requiring funding is a field trip to the "Bodies Revealed" exhibit at the Grand Rapids Public Museum.

Students, faculty and the community have embraced the PULSE initiatives. "I like how they did the lunch changes here," said Heidi, a 6th grader, "It makes us more healthy." Sam, an 8th grader, said, "I like that we have healthier choices in our lunchroom. I like that we don't have French fries now because I would eat them every day."

"Our town loves the healthy changes going on at Cherryland Middle School," said Gray, who is also a member of the Coordinated School Health Team. "Parents want their kids to eat well and be offered healthy choices at school. Also, parents appreciate the PULSE team's view on saving the environment from a bunch of Styrofoam trays."

Gray said that the biggest challenge has been getting everyone on board with tray washing. On a rotating basis, several students helped wash the lunch trays each day, which took time away from recess. "We talked to them as a PULSE team quite a few times and told them that if we do this we'll save over 300,000 Styrofoam trays from being thrown in the garbage," said Gray. "They jumped right in and followed our schedule created by the PULSE kids." Zach, a 7th grader, said, "I think the tray washing is really good because it cuts back on the Styrofoam trays in landfills. It's always good to save the Earth!"

"I would encourage any school to create their very own health committee," said Gray. "There is nothing better than empowering students to teach others about being healthier."

**CASE STUDY****CITY HIGH SCHOOL (6-12), GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN****STUDENT ACCESSIBLE VENDING MACHINES—STOCKED BY DISTRICT**

One day, City High School had several soft drink and candy vending machines throughout the school; the next day, they were gone. Just as suddenly, new contraptions appeared in the cafeteria: healthy vending machines.

The planning process took longer: three months to be exact. The changeover was initiated by the school food service personnel, who stock the machines. The school district provided funding, oversees the products, and receives the revenue. The switch to the new vending machines did not alter revenue.

Dan Droski, health teacher, said the change didn't meet with a lot of resistance from the students. "They were shocked that one day, the vending machines were gone. Then, the healthy vending machines popped up and they liked 'playing' the new machines." School staff and parents loved the change, too, said Droski. "The PTA and other parents are very health-conscious and were big proponents to get the soft drink and candy machines out of the school."

Droski said a lot of the kids "live on" the vending machines. "Half of the kids here get free breakfast and lunch and then they fill in with snacks. When some students are running behind—like in the morning—they use the vending machine to get healthy options." Droski also mentioned that some students purchase items from the healthy vending machine for lunch instead of participating in the school lunch program, however, the students aren't able to receive a reimbursable school meal through the machine.

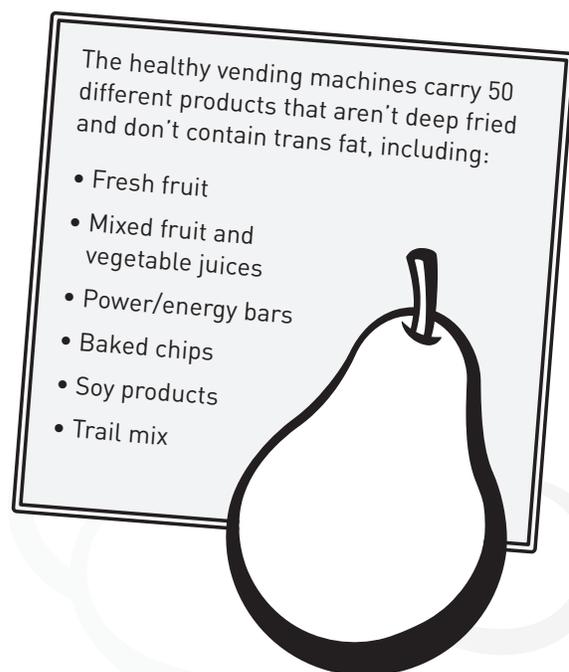
"The district does a nice job with the healthy vending machines," said Droski. "The items are appealing to kids and they're good, healthy stuff like apples, pears, and oddball drinks you can't get anywhere else like papaya-mango-strawberry. All the products have a healthy spin—they're a better snack choice for students. And students are health conscious—they will choose healthy food and beverages if they're available."

During one of his health classes, Droski asked a few of his students for their thoughts on the healthy vending machines:

Sarah said, "Vending machines are awesome because the money comes back to help the school."

Maria said, "The food inside the machine is not only delicious but nutritious and healthy."

Alijandro said, "Bro, I love healthy food and stuff."





CASE STUDY

DETROIT EDISON PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY, DETROIT, MICHIGAN

STUDENT-LED TEAM

While writing a grant for a school-based clinic, the coordinated school health team at Detroit Edison Public School Academy recognized the need for student leader involvement. To fulfill that need, school nurse Maureen Murphy created a Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC) in 2010.

“Those involved in the SHAC are well-spoken, very serious about the health of our students and they realize that they have a big influence on younger students,” said Murphy. “This group has been so important to the peer buy-in and acceptance of healthier changes.” Darlene Ice, first grade teacher and mother of a fifth grader, agrees. “The SHAC created exciting things within the school. My students want to be just like the older students—my students just light up when the older students come to the classroom with news or to teach them things.”

For the most parts, students at Detroit Edison Public School Academy have embraced the changes with enthusiasm. “The great thing about the SHAC is that they tell you what’s not working,” said Murphy.

The efforts of the SHAC are also reinforced by teachers who have begun a cross-curriculum approach to include health in every subject. As a result of the many health initiatives, Murphy has seen a complete cultural shift toward healthier students. “Staff is trying to get healthier, too!” Murphy added.

“This group changes lives because peers look to each other for answers and the Student Health Advisory Council is role modeling positive healthy behaviors that the students assimilate.”
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CATHERINE SANDERS, A PARENT AND MEMBER OF THE COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM

The SHAC is a group of highly motivated 6th, 7th and 8th graders who volunteer to act as representatives for their fellow students. The SHAC members take their position seriously and consider their opinions to be the voice of the typical student. “The excitement of this group is growing,” said Murphy. “Students constantly want to join and so I have to limit how many can do so.”

The SHAC holds formal meetings during lunch on a weekly basis to discuss which health topics they would like to work on. Meetings are facilitated by the school nurse and the student president of the council; and the council is mentored and monitored by the Coordinated School Health Team.

The SHAC relies on fundraising to support its initiatives and utilizes health and nutrition information and resources from grant programs such as the Fuel Up to Play 60 grant through United Dairy Industry of Michigan and the Building Healthier Communities grant through Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

- Since its inception in 2010, the SHAC helped develop and assist with the following initiatives:
- Taste tests
 - Nutrition counseling
 - Anti-bullying videos
 - Swine flu video
 - School-based health clinic video
 - Fruit salad videos
 - Obstacle courses for younger students
 - Health fairs
 - Presentation at the Green Day Fair
 - Health pep rally
 - Bed bug awareness
 - Health bill debates: Advocacy Health Day at the Lansing State Capital



CASE STUDY

MACDONALD ELEMENTARY (K-5), ANCHOR BAY SCHOOL DISTRICT, CASCO, MI

CLASSROOM PARTY/CELEBRATION

Once a month, students at MacDonald Elementary who have exhibited positive behavior have the opportunity to join the principal, Sherri Hoffman, for a special lunch. In the past, the special lunch menu included pizza, chips and soft drinks. In 2009, Hoffman and the elementary cook, Lisa Allor, gave the menu a makeover. The chips and soft drinks were replaced with fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and low-fat milk.

“We make up a beautiful vegetable tray with two to three different types of vegetables,” said Allor. “We’ve offered cucumber slices, broccoli, green pepper wedges, celery sticks, and carrot sticks along with a lite ranch dipping sauce. On the fruit tray we offer a few choices such as sliced oranges, grapes, pineapple, apple slices and bananas. The kids serve themselves with tongs and they each get their own little cup of dipping sauce. We never have anything left over.”

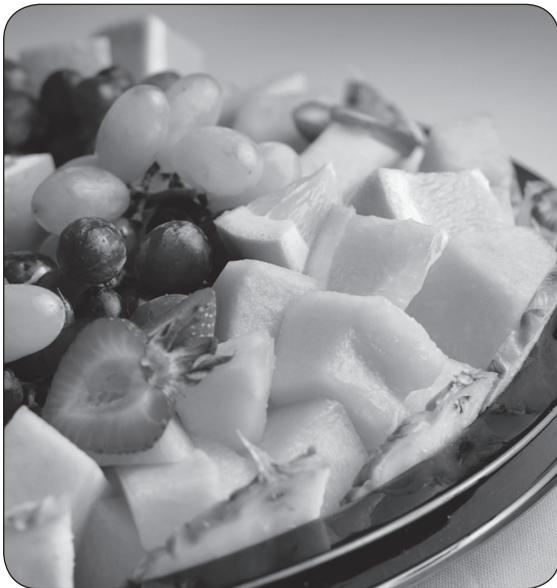
Students are eligible to have lunch with the principal when they collect 25 PAWS tickets. PAWS (proud to be me, always respectful, willing to be responsible, and a safe citizen) tickets are awarded when a staff member sees a student listening, following directions and being considerate to others. When a student earns 25 PAWS tickets, an invitation to the lunch celebration is sent home.

Students can also redeem PAWS tickets for items from the PAWS cart including stickers and pencils.

More and more students are choosing to save their PAWS tickets for the lunch celebration instead of “spending” them on items from the PAWS cart. As more students save enough PAWS tickets to eat lunch with the principal, the lunch celebration is becoming more popular.

“We are aiming to make the next generation healthier,” said Allor. “And I know the memories we are making for the students at our school will last a lifetime.”

LISA ALLOR, ELEMENTARY COOK



The lunch celebration takes place once a month in the library or art room during the first recess and lunch period. “Our students look forward to eating lunch with the principal—sharing time together, talking and eating,” said Allor. “The kids have the chance to meet other students from different grades. I see the kids helping each other out—holding doors open for each other and getting milk out of the milk cooler for someone else.”

The monthly lunch celebrations run October through May. The foodservice department covers the cost of the food which varies depending on the number of students who choose to attend the special lunch.



CASE STUDY

MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT ACCESSIBLE VENDING MACHINE—STOCKED BY OUTSIDE VENDOR

Over several years, Marshall High School's Coordinated School Health Team (CSHT) worked to reduce the number of vending machines dispensing soft drinks in the school. In 2004, there were six; by 2010, there was one. The five vending machines that previously offered soft drinks were stocked with bottled water, zero calorie sports drinks and vitamin water. The remaining soft drink vending machine was stocked with diet soft drinks.

The assistant principal at that time, Andrea Nessel, also a member of the CSHT, worked with the beverage vendor to make the switch to healthier options. "There were no major complaints from students at all about it," said Nessel, "Students that really wanted regular soft drinks brought it in, but most students drink water, flavored water, or diet soft drinks."

"It worked for us to reduce the amount of soft drinks available to students over time. The machines were gradually changed over. The students seemed to take the changes in stride. Some students have requested that the vending machines contain more water."

SUE BOLEY, SCHOOL NURSE

Soon after, the CSHT recommended to the school board that the soft drink vending machine be stocked with only caffeine-free diet soft drinks.

Recently, all soft drinks were removed from the school.

In the past, the profits from the pop vending machines were used for student activities and awards. After the change to healthier vended beverages, revenues from beverage vending machines decreased \$10,000. Although the loss of income was difficult to deal with, the administration decided that offering and promoting healthier choices was of utmost importance, so they sought out and found alternate funding sources. Now, student activities and awards are funded through grants and community support.

The success of the program is attributed to the CSHT, an assessment of the school health environment, and administrative support. The CSHT meets often and includes staff members from nutrition services, physical education and health education, administration, classroom teachers, a school counselor, parents, and a representative from Michigan State University Extension.





CASE STUDY

MATHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PREK-6), MUNISING PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MUNISING, MI

FUNDRAISING—OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL DAY

Fans who visit the concession stand at the yearly basketball tournament sponsored by Mather Elementary School can purchase nutritious fare such as turkey or ham subs on whole wheat, fruit, yogurt, chocolate milk, lower-sugar sports drinks, water, string cheese, granola bars and nuts. These snacks take center stage while the usual concession stand choices such as candy and chips are farther from reach.

Parent volunteers coach the basketball team and organize the yearly tournament, which is the culmination of the school's free after-school basketball program for students in grades 2-6. On average, 80 students participate in the program, which represents approximately 32 percent of the students in the second through sixth grades. Through donations and the sale of tickets, t-shirts, program ads and concessions, the tournament generates revenue that is used for uniforms, other local tournament fees, improvements to the basketball court and a free summer basketball clinic.

During the 2008-09 school year, Paula Ackerman, parent, registered dietitian, Coordinated School Health Team (CSHT) leader, and basketball tournament committee member, recommended that the concession stand menu get a nutrition upgrade. During the three months prior to that year's basketball tournament, the CSHT developed a new concession menu. Now, almost half of the items are healthy choices.

Dee Jay Paquette, principal and coordinator of the basketball tournament said, "We've been making positive changes to improve our school's health—this just seemed to be the right thing to do."



"Because we've been making several positive changes to school health and wellness, when we included more healthy options, there was no negative feedback. In fact, many kids and parents welcomed the change. Many parents commented that it was nice to see healthier options offered during a school function."

PAULA ACKERMAN, PARENT,
REGISTERED DIETITIAN

The healthier items are sold at equal or lower cost than the candy and the introduction of chocolate milk was hailed with a promotional flyer highlighting its nutrient profile. After the new concession menu debuted, about one-third less candy was sold compared to the previous year. However, total revenue from concession sales remained constant. The stable revenue was due, in part, to donations of healthier snacks by parents and of bottled water by local grocery stores.

"I definitely appreciate it," said Libby Blank, a parent. "It's nice when you can send your kids to the concession stand and not worry about having to argue with them about eating a bunch of junk. [The healthy choices] go hand in hand with this tournament, which promotes physical activity."



CASE STUDY

MATTAWAN EARLY ELEMENTARY (K-2), MATTAWAN, MICHIGAN**CLASSROOM PARTY/CELEBRATION**

At Mattawan Early Elementary School, it was tradition that on each student's birthday, the student was allowed to bring in birthday treats for the classroom and also deliver them personally to specialty teachers, school personnel, and the principal. Unfortunately, the tradition was taking time away from classroom instruction and the school staff's work day. "On some days, I would get up to 15 cupcakes!" said principal Derek Wheaton. In addition, many students had food allergies and it didn't seem fair that some students weren't able to enjoy the special treats with their classmates.

"The creation of our school Wellness Team along with all of the positive changes we have made, for both kids and adults, have had a tremendous effect and influence in our school. There is a huge health, nutrition, and wellness awareness that did not exist before. The programs and policy changes that we have implemented have been embraced by our staff for the betterment/benefit of everyone."

BETH PRINCIPE, INTEGRATED ARTS TEACHER, WELLNESS TEAM CO-CHAIR, MATTAWAN EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In 2009, Wheaton decided to restructure the way celebration treats were handled in the classrooms. He did so in stages, beginning with education and encouragement rather than directives. "It was more of a movement," Wheaton explained. "Staff members on our School Improvement Team brought back ideas about birthday celebrations from the 2010 Eat Healthy + Play Hard = Smart Students Conference and were excited to implement them. During the second year of the new system, teachers saw more success and more signed on. It helped that the changes were encouraged, not mandated. It really bubbled up from the teachers who wanted to try it out."

The first step of the transition was to no longer allow children to travel out of the classroom to deliver birthday treats. This cut down on interruptions and minimized lost instructional time.

The next step was to encourage parents and teachers to provide healthier treats for all classroom celebrations and to encourage treat-free birthday celebrations. Parents received notifications at kindergarten roundup and through school newsletters. Now in the third year of the transition, in order to continue to educate and support parents, the school staff is creating a list of nutritious snack suggestions and will showcase examples of nutritious snacks at the fall school open house.

Eventually, treats will be completely eliminated during classroom birthday celebrations and instead, birthdays will be celebrated with non-food items and activities for the birthday girl or boy, such as a special chair, book, pencil or a special choice—the method of celebration is left to the discretion of each teacher.

With the adoption of the 2010 *Michigan Nutrition Standards*, Wheaton said all classrooms will celebrate birthdays treat-free. Teachers periodically complete a Zoomerang survey to gauge their attitudes and practices regarding classroom treats and snacks, food-as-reward, and physical activity opportunities in and outside the classroom. The most recent survey revealed that as of May 2011, over 80% of the classrooms no longer served birthday treats.

Currently, Wheaton said about half of all treats served at holiday celebrations are healthy choices. Looking to the future, Wheaton is planning to eliminate all holiday celebrations and instead, offer fall, winter, spring and year-end celebrations.

Overall, parents have been receptive to the changes and are following the guidelines the principal has set forth. If parents bring in treats that don't meet the guidelines, teachers explain the reasons for the change, focusing on increased instructional time and cost savings, and invite the parents to take the treats to the principal.

Wheaton feels that parent education is key. On a monthly basis, book bags filled with nutrition information and resources travel around the classroom and are shared with parents. In addition, Wheaton is considering creating a video about healthy food choices for students and parents. "What is most important is that we focus on the health of the child," he said.



CASE STUDY

PARKSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL, JACKSON, MICHIGAN

STUDENT ACCESSIBLE VENDING—STOCKED BY DISTRICT

When a la carte sales dropped at Parkside Middle School after a switch to healthier food offerings, the Coordinated School Health Team searched for another way to provide students with healthy choices while generating income. A healthy vending machine was the answer.

“Gradually, the school food service staff replaced the less healthy choices. A gradual change is easier for adults and kids.”

LAURA QUINN, PARKSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL
ENGLISH TEACHER AND MEMBER OF THE
COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM

In the fall of 2009, the school food service department installed a cold vending machine at Parkside Middle School in order to offer healthy snacks for students after school.

To select the most appropriate products to vend, the food service staff considers nutrition information and price, and refers to the competitive food nutrition standards from the Institute of Medicine and the district’s wellness policy.

The healthy vending machine offers fresh-made sandwiches, fresh fruit cups, yogurt parfaits, and packaged healthy snacks. In addition, the school’s beverage vending machines offer only water, milk and 100% fruit juice. The food service department stocks the healthy vending machine three times a week and receives the revenue from product sales which paid for the cost of the machine and also helps offset the additional cost of purchasing fresh products.

Students and staff are pleased. Instead of purchasing “less healthy” snacks from convenience stores, students utilize the healthy vending machine. “The students are enjoying the snacks and the school feels good about teaching healthy choices by example,” said Laura Quinn, Parkside Middle School English teacher and member of the Coordinated School Health Team.

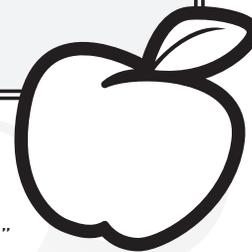
“Improving the school nutrition environment is a process,” explained Quinn. “We started by sending out surveys to staff and students to ask what they wanted. We also invited students to our health team meetings to involve them in the process. It’s important to bring everyone on board and get everyone’s opinion. Often, people want healthy choices.”

And that’s exactly what happened. Students and staff requested fresh fruits and vegetables and healthier sandwich choices. The students had the opportunity to taste test options and provide input.

The soft drink machines are gone now, along with the candy and gum. “We’re also trying to increase the amount of beverages kids are drinking: water and 100% fruit and vegetable juices,” said Quinn. “We provided students with water bottles with the Parkside logo, which they’re allowed to bring into the classrooms.”

Additional changes to the school nutrition environment at Parkside Middle School:

- Before- and after-school program offering breakfast/cereal bars and beverages for students who arrive early or stay after school to receive help with homework
- School breakfast program offered every day
- Healthier choices on the school lunch menu
- Sack lunches provided to students attending the after school program
- Summer school program that offers breakfast and lunch





CASE STUDY

PINCONNING AREA HIGH SCHOOL, PINCONNING, MICHIGAN

SCHOOL STORE

With the 2010 *Nutrition Standards* coming down the pike, Brad Dubay, business education teacher, voluntarily stopped selling candy and gum in the school store in the fall of 2009. He replaced those items with healthier choices suggested by the Coordinated School Health Team such as granola bars and baked chips. The school store serves both middle school and high school students before school, between classes and during lunch.

Another upside of offering healthier choices at the school store was that student participation in school lunch increased significantly as did à la carte sales.

The downside was that the store's profits dropped from \$70-\$95 per day to \$5-\$10 per day. As a result, Dubay had to cut back on the amount of funding the school store provided to school clubs, organizations and community project including drama, band and the food pantry.

However, the downside didn't keep Dubay down for long. He and his crew of student volunteers began creating designs for clothing in-house and selling the clothing through the school store.

"We started with a few items of clothing and then expanded our inventory," said Dubay. "At first, we bought clothes from a supplier, had them printed by printing companies, and had to charge students twelve to fifteen dollars for a shirt. Then we got grants from local businesses and used that money to help fund the purchase of our own software, a laser printer and a die printer, a laser cutter to cut vinyl designs, and a heat press. Now, we can sell a shirt for six to eight dollars." The students help sketch the designs, which are approved by student bosses, Dubay, or the school store board. In the near future, Dubay plans to purchase a screen printer for the school.

"At first, students were looking for the candy and gum—we got a little backlash," said Dubay. "But it was pretty easy to get away from selling it. The school staff were appreciative of the changes, although they miss being able to get gum at school. And the custodial staff was pleased that there wasn't as much trash to deal with."

BRAD DUBAY, BUSINESS EDUCATION TEACHER

Dubay learned a lot from the process. His advice to other schools is to research all aspects of the project, talk with people, and start small. School administrators supplied Dubay with grant information and forms and the owner of a local embroidery business showed Dubay how to make and print the designs. "It's important to have support of school administrators and other departments, such as the athletic department, and to collaborate with local businesses," he said.

Due to rebounding profits, the school store donated over \$4,000 in 2011 to various clubs and groups and also made uniforms for the middle school sport teams.